UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
Southwest Fisheries Science Center
Santa Cruz Laboratory
110 Shaffer Road
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

4 May 2005

Dear Interested Party,

The Technical Recovery Team (TRT) for the North-Central California Coast Recovery Domain (NCCCRD) has recently completed a draft report titled "An analysis of historical population structure for Evolutionarily Significant Units of Chinook salmon, coho salmon, and steelhead in the North-Central California Coast Recovery Domain". By way of this announcement, we are seeking comment from interested parties regarding the scientific content and analysis that underlie the conclusions reached by the TRT.

Understanding the historical population structure of an ESU is a critical first step in the process of developing biologically sound viability criteria for the ESU and for the populations it comprises. This report, by delineating populations and evaluating their likely role in the ESU under historical conditions, describes the historical template against which proposed future ESU "configurations" can be compared, and provides the foundation for subsequent consideration by the TRT of population and ESU viability criteria. Thus, this report represents a significant portion of the scientific advice provided by the TRT to the Recovery Team charged with developing recovery goals and recovery plans designed to achieve these goals. We emphasize that the conclusions in this document do not represent policy decisions, nor do they include specific outcomes necessary for eventual delisting of ESUs.

In preparing this report, the TRT was forced to confront and accommodate a high degree of uncertainty in nearly every aspect of the analysis. For this reason, we spend considerable effort to outline our assumptions, the uncertainty in our conclusions, and where appropriate, plausible alternatives. However, we also emphasize that by taking a holistic view of an ESU—specifically through consideration of how spatial structure and diversity contribute to viability at both the ESU and population level—recovery planners can greatly reduce the consequences of error in our conclusions in predicting the future status of an ESU.

In this context, we invite comment on the scientific content and analysis presented in the report. The report is available in electronic form on the Santa Cruz Laboratory website (http://santacruz.nmfs.noaa.gov/esa/salmonids/trt/nccc.php). Comment should be submitted electronically via email to Eric Bjorkstedt (Eric.Bjorkstedt@noaa.gov) with "Draft PSR Comments" in the subject line. Please take advantage of section and line numbering whenever possible in order to support efficient consideration and incorporation of comments. We ask that all comments be submitted by 3 June 2005.

Sincerely,

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Chair, TRT for the NCCCRD